

During-Reading Strategies



Think-Aloud 1



Reading Skills

- Making predictions
- Comparing and contrasting
- Monitoring reading
- Visualizing the text
- Making connections

Overview of the “Think-Aloud” Strategy

Students need to think and ask questions while they read; however, struggling readers do not always know to ask the questions that good readers automatically ask. The “Think-Aloud” strategy helps students make predictions about the text; compare and contrast events, ideas, and characters; visualize the information that is described in the text; and make connections to prior knowledge.

Classroom Model/Situation

Have you ever encountered a student who was a wonderful oral reader, yet, when questioned about the content of the just-read selection, failed to give any indication that he or she had read anything at all? I remember one such student in my 10th-grade English class. I’ll call him Eric for this scenario. Whenever I asked for volunteers to read passages or selections from literature, all of the students would beg for Eric to read. In other words, they volunteered him. It was no wonder. Eric had a fabulous voice. The pitch was deep, and his words seemed to slide out of his mouth and float in the air, leaving us, the listeners, in an almost hypnotic state.

It was a mystery to me why such a seemingly competent reader was not meeting with success in the class. Usually after a reading, I ask questions of the class and allow anyone in the room to answer. One day, after a reading by Eric, I asked him to answer the questions. To my amazement, he did not know one answer. I said to him, “You just read the passage; you should know the answers.” He replied, “I read the words and make the sounds, but I don’t think about what I’m reading.”

His response surprised me. As a competent reader, I had never thought about the possibility of looking at words and making sounds yet not making meaning. The “Think-Aloud” strategy is for students like Eric. It will force them to think when they read.

Activities for the “Think-Aloud” Strategy

- Model the strategy before asking the students to try it. Read a line or two from a selection, then stop to think out loud. Many students have a difficult time paying attention when reading long passages of description. The “Think-Aloud” strategy helps students focus. For example, in chapter 18 of *Wish You Well*, Louisa has given the children a much-needed day off from the overwhelming chores of the farm. Diamond, Lou, and Oz take a long walk to town. While there, they meet Cotton and go on a tour of the courthouse and his office. Here’s how the strategy goes in an excerpt from chapter 18: (Lines from the book are in regular type, while the teacher’s verbal statements are in italics.)

On the walls were portraits of white-haired men in black robes. *[Um... Judges usually wear black robes. These are probably pictures of judges.]* The children ran their

hands along the carved wood and took turns sitting in the witness and jury boxes. *[That was probably exciting. Imagine being able to sit on the stand and in the jury box!]*

Diamond asked to sit in the judge's chair, but Cotton didn't think that was a good idea and neither did Fred. *[Diamond probably doesn't know much about courts and judges.]* When they weren't looking, Diamond grabbed a seat anyway and came away puff-chested like a rooster, until Lou, who had seen this offense, poked him hard in the ribs. *[Diamond will try anything. At least Lou understands that some things are serious. I wonder if Diamond will get into trouble?]*

After modeling the strategy, give the students the opportunity to ask questions of the teacher. The most obvious question will probably be something like, "Do I have to stop and talk about every sentence?" Although this example models a think-aloud statement or question after every sentence, interrupting with think-aloud statements after longer passages is best. After all, it would take an extraordinary amount of time to stop and talk about every sentence in the novel! The students would never want to read again. However, in order for the students to practice, shorter passages work best in the beginning.

- Dr. Kylene Beers, Professor of Reading, offers her students a bookmark (see next page) to use during the Think-Aloud activity. It lists the following six strategies for them to remember:
 - Identify the problem.
 - Predict what will happen next.
 - Fix the problem.
 - Make comparisons.
 - Picture the text.
 - Make comments.

In looking back at the "Think-Aloud" paragraph above, you will see the following:

- Making comments: *Um... Judges usually wear black robes. These are probably pictures of judges.*
 - Picturing the text: *That was probably exciting. Imagine being able to sit on the stand and in the jury box!*
 - Identifying the problem: *Diamond probably doesn't know much about courts and judges.*
 - Predicting what will happen next: *Diamond will try anything. At least Lou understands that some things are serious. I wonder if Diamond will get into trouble?*
- After modeling several passages for the students, have the students work with partners to "think-aloud" several additional passages. Either give the students bookmarks as Dr. Beers did, or write the strategies on the board for easy reference. Be sure to walk around and listen to the students. Praise often! Ask questions of your own to clarify for the students.
 - Provide many opportunities throughout the book for students to use the "Think-Aloud" strategy. Like anything else, this strategy takes practice. Students who are used to looking at words and making sounds but not meaning will need time to practice before reading and thinking happen all at once.

Bookmarks for Think-Aloud 1

<p>1. Identify the problem.</p> <p>2. Fix the problem.</p> <p>3. Picture the text.</p> <p>4. Predict what will happen next.</p> <p>5. Make comparisons.</p> <p>6. Make comments.</p>	<p>1. Identify the problem.</p> <p>2. Fix the problem.</p> <p>3. Picture the text.</p> <p>4. Predict what will happen next.</p> <p>5. Make comparisons.</p> <p>6. Make comments.</p>	<p>1. Identify the problem.</p> <p>2. Fix the problem.</p> <p>3. Picture the text.</p> <p>4. Predict what will happen next.</p> <p>5. Make comparisons.</p> <p>6. Make comments.</p>	<p>1. Identify the problem.</p> <p>2. Fix the problem.</p> <p>3. Picture the text.</p> <p>4. Predict what will happen next.</p> <p>5. Make comparisons.</p> <p>6. Make comments.</p>
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Think-Aloud 2



Reading Skills

- Monitoring reading

Overview of the “Think-Aloud” Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to help struggling readers think about how they make meaning when they read. While one student is reading aloud selected paragraphs from *Wish You Well* and pausing to “think aloud,” a partner records on a tally sheet the types of comments made by the reader. The goal is to help students learn to monitor their comprehension silently as they read. This exercise should be practiced 10 to 15 minutes once a week in order to achieve the desired results. If you feel the need to give a grade for this exercise, assess and grade the students on participation.

Activity for the “Think-Aloud” Strategy

1. Explain to the class the purpose of this exercise and that they will work in pairs to help each other. Tell the students that asking questions about a text is actually a means of identifying comprehension problems.
2. Distribute copies of the “Think-Aloud” example from the first three paragraphs of chapter 10 in *Wish You Well* and the tally sheet (see next two pages).
3. Ask the students to look at the “Think-Aloud” tally sheet as you explain the nature of the types of comments:
 - “Lou and Oz raced past the empty yard and inside the schoolhouse. Breathless, they hustled to their seats.” (chapter 21, opening) [*It sounds as if they’re late to school.*] — **predicting what will happen next**
 - “She had passed secret coves overhung with willow and corralled by rock. Many of the coves were graced with cups of frothing springwater. There were neglected fields of long-vanished homesteads, the broomsedge flourishing there around the rock bones of chimneys without houses.” (chapter 26, section 3) [*It’s easy to imagine that this was once a thriving community.*] — **picturing the text**
 - “They prepared for winter by sharpening tools with the grinder and rattail files, mucking out the stalls and spreading the manure over the plowed-under fields....They brought the livestock in, kept them fed and watered, milked the cows, and did their chores, which now all seemed as natural as breathing.” (chapter 31, section 3) [*My mother grew up on a farm and had to do the same things.*] — **making comparisons**
 - “Louisa brought over a bucket and a glass. She put the glass on the table, draped a cloth over it, and poured the milk from the bucket into it, foam bubbling up on the cloth.” (chapter 12, section 2) [*I don’t understand what Louisa is doing in these sentences.*] — **identifying comprehension problems**
 - “Lou looked at her glass. ‘What’s the cloth for?’ ‘Take things out the milk you don’t need in you,’ answered Louisa.” (chapter 12, section 2) [*Oh, I now understand why the milk was poured through the cloth.*] — **fixing comprehension problems**
 - “The barn smelled of stacked hay, wet earth, large animals and their warm manure. The floor was dirt covered with straw. On the walls hung bridles and harnesses, some cracked and worn out, others well oiled and supple.” (chapter 12, section 2) [*I like the way these sentences paint a picture and make me almost see and smell the barn.*] — **making comments**
4. Read aloud from the model, pausing to make the bracketed “Think-Aloud” comments.

5. Have the students use the tally sheet to identify the types of comments made on the model sheet.
6. Pair up the students. Have one student in each pair read assigned paragraphs from a particular chapter in *Wish You Well* and pause to make comments. Have the listening partner identify and tally the comments made on the reading partner's tally sheet.
7. Have the pair switch roles and read the next set of consecutive paragraphs, the first reader filling out his or her partner's tally sheet.
8. When they have finished their "Think-Alouds," have the students discuss their tally sheets.

Excerpt for Think-Aloud 2

From *Wish You Well*, Chapter 10, opening paragraphs (permission to reprint granted by Warner Books, Inc.):

The kitchen shelves were worn, knot-holed pine, floors the same. The floorboards creaked slightly as Oz swept with a short-handled broom, while Lou loaded lengths of cut wood into the iron belly of the Sears catalogue cook stove that took up one wall of the small room. Fading sunlight came through the window and also peered through each wall crevice, and there were many. An old coal-oil lamp hung from a peg. Fat black iron kettles hung from the wall. In another corner was a food safe with hammered metal doors; a string of dried onions lay atop it and a glass jug of kerosene next to that. *[This reminds me of my great grandmother's house.]*

As Lou examined each piece of hickory or oak, it was as though she was revisiting each facet of her prior life, before throwing it in the fire, saying good-bye as the flames ate it away. The room was dark and the smells of damp and burnt wood equally pungent. *[I wonder if the house could catch on fire.]* Lou stared over at the fireplace. The opening was large, and she guessed that the cooking had been done there before the Sears cook stove had come. The brick ran to the ceiling, and iron nails were driven through the mortar all over; tools and kettles, and odd pieces of other things Lou couldn't identify but that looked well-used, hung from them. In the center of the brick wall was a long rifle resting on twin braces angled into the mortar. *[From this description, I can see how difficult cooking in the past must have been.]*

The knock on the door startled them both. Who would expect visitors so far above sea level? Lou opened the door and Diamond Skinner stared back at her with a vast smile. He held up a mess of smallmouth bass, as though he was offering her the crowns of dead kings. Loyal Jeb was beside him, his snout wrinkling as he drew in the fine fishy aroma. *[I bet that Diamond plans to have Lou cook these fish.]*

Tally Sheet for Think-Aloud 2

Reader _____

Listener _____

Think-Aloud Comments	Tally
Identifying comprehension problems	
Fixing comprehension problems	
Predicting what will happen next	
Picturing the text	
Making comparisons	
Making comments	

Save the Last Word for Me



Reading Skills

- Rereading
- Comparing and contrasting
- Articulating meaning
- Identifying literary elements
- Analyzing descriptive writing
- Identifying theme
- Identifying conflict
- Analyzing persuasive technique
- Drawing conclusions

Overview of the “Save the Last Word for Me” Strategy

The “Save the Last Word for Me” strategy requires the students to find a passage in the text that illustrates an example of something, such as a literary element or a technique, specified by the teacher. It also requires the students to discuss their choices and defend them.

Activity for the “Save the Last Word for Me” Strategy

1. Have the students choose a passage from *Wish You Well*
 - that is humorous (More advanced students should also be able to explain a method used by the author to make the passage funny.)
 - that uses figurative language, explaining what is literally meant by the author
 - that clearly defines George Davis as the antagonist of the novel
 - that supports the conflict of the novel
 - in which the author uses imagery
 - that defines irony of situation in the novel
 - that presents a persuasive technique used by Southern Valley Coal and Gas to get Louisa’s land.
2. Have the students copy their selected passage onto a note card.
3. Then have the students write a paragraph on the back of the card, explaining why they selected this passage.
4. Group the students into small groups, and have each student read his or her selected passage to the group and get feedback about what the others in the group think the passage means, listening for comments related to the given assignment.
5. Then have each student turn his or her card over and read what he or she has written about why this particular selection was made — why this passage illustrates the given concept/idea.
6. Tell the other students that if they disagree with the choice, they must express their reasons for disagreeing.
7. Tell the class that the “last word” is “saved” for the student who made the selection, and he or she may choose either to alter or stand by the choice.

Assessment — Save the Last Word for Me (SLWM)

Name _____ Date _____

Category	Consistent	Inconsistent	Comments
1. Reads and understands the book			
2. Completes assigned reading on time			
3. Participates in SLWM discussion			
4. Provides at least two reasons for choosing his or her passage			
5. Contributes thoughtful comments to SLWM group discussion			
6. Listens attentively and responds appropriately to peer comments in discussion			
7. Completes assigned SLWM activity on time			
8. Completes SLWM to the best of his or her ability			

Final SLWM Grade _____

Retellings



Reading Skills

- Summarizing
- Identifying literature elements
- Analyzing chronological order
- Identifying the main idea
- Recalling facts

Overview of the “Retellings” Strategy

This strategy should be modeled for students before they are asked to try it. Once they understand the process, ask students to retell specific events from the novel or retell the plot in its entirety. The teacher should decide if this assignment should be written or presented orally. Students should be given a copy of the rubric that will be used for evaluation (see next page). To incorporate retellings in the classroom effectively, the teacher should model this strategy often. Remember that students need to be provided with a rubric that can be used to plan and assess retellings.

Activity for the “Retellings” Strategy

1. Have each student retell one of the following:
 - the entire plot of the novel *Wish You Well*
 - Lou and Oz’s journey from New York City to the mountain in Virginia
 - events of the story that they consider to be humorous, including exact quotes and explaining their meaning
 - Lou, Oz, and Diamond’s trip into the town of Dickens
 - what happened at the mines when Eugene went to get a bucket of coal
 - the resolution of the conflict in the novel
 - an event from the novel that they consider relevant to society today
 - events that support George Davis as the antagonist of the novel
 - events that portray Diamond Skinner as a smart boy without book learning
 - events in the novel that brought tears to their eyes, including specific quotes and diction (word choice) that prompted this emotion
 - settings in the novel that the author describes by using sensory language.
2. Evaluate the students according to the rubric shown on the next page.

Retellings**Retellings Rubric**

Name _____ Date _____

Text _____ Selected by _____

Directions: Use the following checklist to rate the retelling. For each item below, circle a number from 0 to 3. (On this scale, 0 means the retelling did not include the item at all, and 3 means the retelling completely and successfully included the item.)

Does the retelling...	Rating			
1. have an introduction that includes the novel's title and setting of Dickens, Virginia?	0	1	2	3
2. list the main characters and explain their relationship to one another?	0	1	2	3
3. explain the roles of Louisa Mae Cardinal and the Southern Valley Coal and Gas Company as well as of the other antagonists and protagonists?	0	1	2	3
4. list the main events as they occur from New York City to Dickens, Virginia?	0	1	2	3
5. discuss the internal and external conflicts faced by Lou Cardinal?	0	1	2	3
6. explain how Lou's conflicts were resolved?	0	1	2	3
7. mention the reader's personal response to the novel?	0	1	2	3

Total Score _____

Comments from listener about the retelling:

Suggestions for the next retelling:

Literature Circles



Reading Skills

- Reading and discussing books
- Connecting with books
- Taking responsibility as readers and constructing meaning together
- Debating and challenging one another
- Making drawings and notes that reflect readers' ideas
- Asking open-ended questions
- Reading aloud of favorite passages
- Revisiting the text constantly
- Proving points and settling differences by using specific passages
- Thinking critically

Overview of the “Literature Circle” Strategy

“Literature Circles” — small groups of students gathered together to discuss a piece of literature in depth — is a teaching method that allows students to become critical thinkers as they engage in ongoing dialogue with a book, in this case *Wish You Well*. Literature circles provide a way for students to engage in critical thinking and reflection as they read, discuss, and respond to the book.

Collaboration is at the heart of this approach. In classrooms all across the country, literature circles are helping to create a student-centered learning environment. Through structured discussion and extended written and artistic response, this strategy guides the students to a deeper understanding of what they read. The key aspect of this strategy is the structured use of role sheets (provided on the following pages) as the students learn to discuss and contribute to the group. These sheets can also be used as evaluation tools.

Activity for the “Literature Circle” Strategy

1. Select members for the Literature Circles (discussion groups).
2. Assign roles for the members of each circle.
3. Assign reading to be completed by the circles inside or outside of class.
4. Select circle meeting dates.
5. Help students prepare for their roles in their circle.
6. Act as a facilitator for the circles.

Discussion Sheet for Literature Circles

Name: _____

Group: _____

Book: Wish You Well by David Baldacci

Role: _____ Pages: _____

- While you are reading or after you have finished reading, prepare for the circle meeting by assuming the identity of one of the strategists below and completing and then presenting your strategy:
 1. **Clarifier:** Your job is to find 5 words or concepts that are important to the story, list and explain each word/concept, and write down its page number.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 2. **Summarizer:** Your job is to prepare a brief summary of the book. You want to convey how the characters are influenced by the various events and how the main conflict contributes to the resolution.

Key Events:

Summary:

3. **Questioner:** Your job is to develop a list of four questions about this book that your circle might discuss. Your task is to help circle members discuss the big ideas in the book and share their reactions. Center your questions on the 5 Ws + How. Be prepared to read aloud key passages that present the answers. List page numbers.

Question 1:

Answer

Question 2:

Answer

Discussion Sheet for Literature Circles, page 2

Question 3:

Answer

Question 4:

Answer

4. **Predictor:** Your job is to predict what you think will happen next in this story. After each prediction defend your reasoning.

Based on what I have read, I predict that the following events will happen:

1.

Why:

2.

Why:

3.

Why:

Literature Circles Role Sheet

Summarizer

Name _____ Circle _____

Book _____

Meeting Date _____ Assignment: Pages _____ to _____

Summarizer: Your job is to prepare a brief summary of today's reading. Your group discussion will start with your 1–2 minute statement that covers the key points, main highlights, and general idea of today's reading assignment.

Summary:

Key Points:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

Connections: What did today's reading remind you of?

Literature Circles Role Sheet

Discussion Director

Name _____ Circle _____

Book _____

Meeting Date _____ Assignment: Pages _____ to _____

Discussion Director: Your job is to develop a list of questions that your group might want to discuss about this part of the book. Don't worry about the small details; your task is to help people talk over the big ideas in the reading and share their reactions. Usually the best discussion questions come from your own thoughts, feelings, and concerns as you read. You can list them below during or after your reading. You may also use some of the general questions below to develop topics for your group.

Possible discussion questions or topics for today

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Sample questions

- What was going through your mind while you read this?
- How did you feel while reading this part of the book?
- What was discussed in this section of the book?
- Can someone summarize briefly?
- Did today's reading remind you of any real-life experiences?
- What questions did you have when you finished this section?
- Did anything in this section of the book surprise you?
- What are the one or two most important ideas?
- What are some things you think will be talked about next.

Topic to be carried over to tomorrow: _____

Assignment for tomorrow: Pages _____ to _____

Literature Circles Role Sheet

Investigator*

Name _____ Circle _____

Book _____

Meeting Date _____ Assignment: Pages _____ to _____

Investigator: Your job is to dig up some background information on any topic related to your book. This might include

- the geography, weather, culture, or history of the book's setting
- information about the author — her/his life and other works
- information about the time period portrayed in the book
- pictures, objects, or materials that illustrate elements of the book
- the history and derivation of words or names used in the book
- music that reflects the book or its time.

This is *not* a formal research report. The idea is to find bits of information or material that helps your group better understand the book. Investigate something that really interests you — something that struck you as puzzling or curious while you were reading.

Sources for information

- the introduction, preface, or “about the author” section of the book
- library books and magazines
- on-line computer search or encyclopedia
- interviews with people who know the topic
- other novels, nonfiction, or textbooks you've read

Topic to be carried over to tomorrow: _____

Assignment for tomorrow: Pages _____ to _____

* Adapted from *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* by Harvey Daniels (Stenhouse Publishers: York, Maine, 1994. Published in Canada by Pembroke Publishers, Markham, Ontario, 1994).

Literature Circles Role Sheet

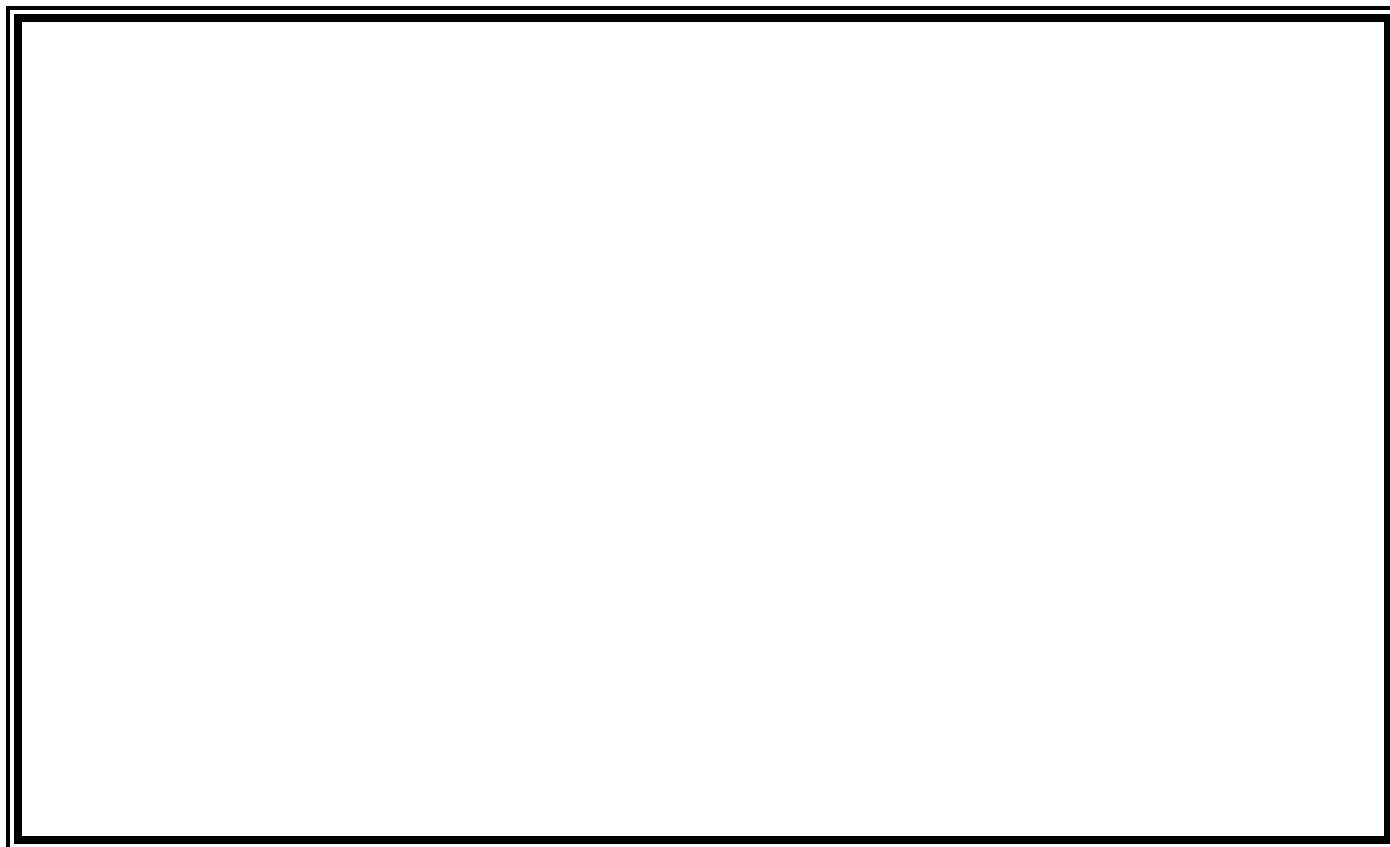
Illustrator*

Name _____ Circle _____

Book _____

Meeting Date _____ Assignment: Pages _____ to _____

Illustrator: Your job is to draw some kind of picture related to the reading. It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, flow chart, or stick figure scene. You can draw a picture of something that is discussed specifically in your book, something that the reading reminded you of, or a picture that conveys any idea or feeling you got from the reading. Any kind of drawing or graphic is okay. You can even label things with words if that helps. Make your drawing on this paper. If you need more room, use the back.



Connections: What did today's reading remind you of?

* Adapted from *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* by Harvey Daniels (Stenhouse Publishers: York, Maine, 1994. Published in Canada by Pembroke Publishers, Markham, Ontario, 1994).

Literature Circles Role Sheet

Connector*

Name _____ Circle _____

Book _____

Meeting Date _____ Assignment: Pages _____ to _____

Connector: Your job is to find connections between the book your group is reading and the world outside. This means connecting the reading to your own life, happenings at school or in the community, similar events at other times and places, or other people or problems that this book brings to mind. You might also see connections between this book and other writings on the same topic or other writings by the same author. There are no right answers here. Whatever the reading connects *you* with is worth sharing!

Some connections I found between this reading and other people, places, events, authors:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Topic to be carried over to tomorrow: _____

Assignment for tomorrow: Pages _____ to _____

* Adapted from *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* by Harvey Daniels (Stenhouse Publishers: York, Maine, 1994. Published in Canada by Pembroke Publishers, Markham, Ontario, 1994).

Literature Circles Role Sheet

Travel Tracer*

Name _____ Circle _____

Book _____

Meeting Date _____ Assignment: Pages _____ to _____

Travel Tracer: When you are reading a book in which characters move around often and the scene changes frequently, it is important for everyone in your group to know *where* things are happening and how the setting may have changed. So that's your job: to track carefully where the action takes place during today's reading. Describe each setting in detail, either in words or with an action map or diagram you can show to your group. You may use the back of this sheet or another sheet. Be sure to give the page locations where the scene is described.

Describe or sketch the setting

- **where today's action begins**

Page where it is described _____

- **where today's key events happen**

Page where it is described _____

- **where today's events end**

Page where it is described _____

Topic to be carried over to tomorrow: _____

Assignment for tomorrow: Pages _____ to _____

* Adapted from *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* by Harvey Daniels (Stenhouse Publishers: York, Maine, 1994. Published in Canada by Pembroke Publishers, Markham, Ontario, 1994).

Literature Circles Role Sheet

Vocabulary Enricher*

Name _____ Circle _____

Book _____

Meeting Date _____ Assignment: Pages _____ to _____

Vocabulary Enricher: Your job is to be on the lookout for a few especially important words in today's reading. If you find words that are puzzling or unfamiliar, mark them while you are reading and then later jot down their definition, either from a dictionary or from some other source. You may also run across familiar words that stand out somehow in the reading — words that are repeated a lot, are used in an unusual way, or provide a key to the meaning of the text. Mark these special words, and be ready to point them out to the group. When your circle meets, help members find and discuss these words.

Page No. & Paragraph	Word	Definition	Plan

Topic to be carried over to tomorrow: _____

Assignment for tomorrow: Pages _____ to _____

* Adapted from *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* by Harvey Daniels (Stenhouse Publishers: York, Maine, 1994. Published in Canada by Pembroke Publishers, Markham, Ontario, 1994).

Circle _____

Date started _____

[illegible]

Literature Circles

Novel Study Self-Evaluation Guide

Name _____ Circle _____

Book _____

Date started _____

_____ I brought my book to class.

_____ I read to where I was supposed to each time.

_____ I talked about the book in the discussion group.

_____ I listened to what other people had to say about the book.

_____ I worked on task in my group.

_____ I used sticky notes to mark places I didn't understand or places I wanted to discuss with my group.

_____ I wrote in my reading log and finished assignments on time.

My overall rating of myself is as follows:

I think the person who should get the best grade in my group is _____ because

Literature Circles

Self-Assessment Form

Name _____ Circle _____

Book _____

Date started _____

My Contribution to Group Discussion

Rate each entry as: 1 – Needs Improving, 2 – Satisfactory, or 3 – Very Good

Type of Contribution	Rating	Example
I shared my ideas and offered my suggestions.	1 2 3	
I spoke clearly and slowly enough to be understood.	1 2 3	
I answered other's questions.	1 2 3	
I remained on topic and helped the group stay focused.	1 2 3	
I encouraged others to participate.	1 2 3	
I disagreed without hurting others' feelings.	1 2 3	
I summarized or repeated my ideas when necessary.	1 2 3	
I gave reasons for opinions.	1 2 3	
I listened courteously and effectively.	1 2 3	
I tried to understand and extend the suggestions of others.	1 2 3	

My most important contribution to the discussion was _____

My plan for improvement is _____

Literature Circles

Literature Circle Evaluation

Name _____ Circle _____

Book _____

Date started _____

Preparation	Student	Teacher
I am prepared for our meetings by consistently doing my preparation work in my notebook.	1 2 3	1 2 3
I am prepared for our meetings by reliably bringing my literature book to class.	1 2 3	1 2 3
I am prepared for our meetings by completing my reading assignments on time.	1 2 3	1 2 3
Participation	Student	Teacher
I participate well in discussions by asking questions of others.	1 2 3	1 2 3
I participate well in discussions by offering my own ideas.	1 2 3	1 2 3
I participate well in discussions by encouraging and respecting others' opinions.	1 2 3	1 2 3
I participate well in discussions by making eye contact with others.	1 2 3	1 2 3
I participate well in discussions by keeping my voice at arm's length (cool, objective).	1 2 3	1 2 3
Comments	Student	Teacher
I am doing my job well.		
Yes, I do this.		
I don't always do this, and I need to improve.		

Literature Circles

Assessment Form for Discussion Groups*

Names _____ Circle _____

Book _____

Date started _____

Groups Discussion Topic or Focus _____

Check the appropriate box. Provide evidence where possible.

	Yes	No	Sometimes	Evidence
Everyone participates and shares in the discussion process. Communication is interactive.				
The group is supportive of its individual members. Group climate promotes friendliness.				
Group members often ask questions for clarification or elaboration.				
The group discussion stays on topic or on directly related issues.				
The group is energetic and enthusiastic.				

What was the best thing about the way this group worked together?

* Saskatchewan Education, *English Language Arts: A Curriculum Guide for the Middle Level* (draft) (Regina: Saskatchewan Education, 1996).

What was one problem the group had?

How did you solve it?

What else might you have done?

What specific plans do you have for improvement?

Read, Rate, and Reread 1



Reading Skills

- Determining writer's purpose
- Identifying the main idea
- Monitoring reading
- Establishing a purpose for reading

Overview of “Read, Rate, and Reread” Strategy

This lesson will help students improve their reading comprehension by emphasizing the importance of careful, repeated readings of material. This strategy can be adapted for use during students' reading of any section of the novel. In this lesson, chapter 5 of *Wish You Well* will be used because it is short enough to be read two or three times by all students during a class period. It is also far enough into the novel for the students to have some prior knowledge to help with understanding.

The students will read a short selection three times and evaluate their understanding of the passage on each successive reading. They will further develop their skill at monitoring their own reading comprehension.

Activity for “Read, Rate, and Reread” Strategy

1. Assign chapter 5 to be read in class. Ask students to rate their understanding of their reading on a scale of 1 to 10. Also, ask them to list any questions they have about their reading. Explain that questions may be about what happened, vocabulary, motivation, or anything else that seems unclear. Although students could do this activity without a chart, one that may prove helpful has been provided on the next page.
2. Direct students to read the chapter and rate their understanding again. Have them indicate which earlier questions they can now answer.
3. Ask students to work in groups of two or three to discuss any unanswered questions they have. Students who answer the questions should indicate the portion of the text that led them to their answer. The groups should list any questions they are still unable to answer. At this point, the questions should include some discussion/opinion questions that might be discussed by the entire class.
4. Ask students to read the chapter for a third time and rate their understanding of the passage one last time.
5. Discuss any remaining questions with the entire class.

Assessment

Ask students to write a sentence or two about what they learned from this reading strategy. Then assess the exercise through discussion with the entire class. Include such questions as the following:

- What did you learn from this activity?
- What was most useful about the activity?
- How will this experience affect the way you approach reading material in the future?
- Did your understanding ratings change? If so, how?
- How do you think your reading of the four previous chapters affected your understanding of this chapter of the novel?

Read, Rate, Reread 1

1. Read the assigned selection, and in the second column, rate your understanding, using a scale of from 1 to 10 with 10 as the highest rating. In the third column, list any questions you have about the selection.
2. Read the selection a second time, and again rate your understanding. In the third column, list any additional questions you have. In the fourth column, note those questions that were answered by the second reading.
3. Work in a group to answer any of your remaining questions. Note those questions that are now answered.
4. As a group, list any questions that remain unanswered.
5. Read the selection for a third time, and again rate your understanding.

	Understanding Rating (Scale 1–10)	Questions	Answers
1st Reading			
2nd Reading			
3rd Reading			

Read, Rate, Reread 2



Reading Skills

- Identifying main idea
- Determining writer's purpose

Overview of the “Read, Rate, Reread” Strategy

Motivating struggling readers to read a passage once is difficult. To have them reread the passage may be even more difficult. Many inexperienced readers do not realize the importance of a skill like rereading. The strategy entitled “Read, Rate, Reread” can help improve a student's comprehension of a text.

The students will read a text once, rate their understanding of that text on a scale of 1 to 10, and write questions about what they did not understand. They will repeat this process two more times. Then, they will discuss unanswered questions in groups of two. Finally, they will bring their remaining questions to the whole class.

Activity for the “Read, Rate, and Reread” Strategy

1. Outline for students the process of this strategy. Tell them they will read a portion of *Wish You Well* three times. After each reading, they will rate themselves on how well they comprehend what they just read and will write down questions they have about the text.
2. Distribute copies of the blackline master “Read, Rate, Reread 2,” found on the next page.
3. Have the students read chapter 7 of *Wish You Well*, rate their comprehension of the reading, and write any questions they have about the selection.
4. Have the students repeat this process twice.
5. After the third reading, place students in pairs to discuss remaining questions.
6. Tell students to cross out any of the questions they answer.
7. Have the class discuss the unanswered questions and the change of ratings from reading to reading.
8. Discuss Baldacci's description of the setting. Ask, “What do you experience as a reader upon Lou and Oz's arrival to the mountains?” Have students complete Part 2 of the blackline master and share their responses with the class.

Assessment

Assess the students' understanding by having them respond to the following questions:

- After the first reading of chapter 7, how well did you understand what you read?
- After discussing your questions with a partner, how well did you understand your reading?
- How did your ratings change each time you read?
- How do you think this strategy will help you change your reading and understanding of chapter 7?

Read, Rate, Reread 2 — *Wish You Well*, Chapter 7

Part 1: Directions

Read chapter 7 of *Wish You Well* and rate your understanding on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 meaning you completely understood the text. Record your rating in the box labeled “First Rating.” Then, on the line provided for item one, write any questions you have. Repeat this process two more times, filling in the lines for items 2 and 3. Then, follow the instructions for items 4 and 5.

First Rating	Second Rating	Third Rating

1. Write down any questions you have after the first reading of chapter 7.

2. Read the selection a second time. This time, slow down any part of the reading that was difficult the first time. Record your rating in the “Second Rating” box. Cross out any questions you can now answer. Write down any new questions you have after the second reading.

3. Read the selection a final time, and discuss with a partner any unanswered questions. Cross out any questions you can now answer. Record your rating in the “Third Rating” box.

Part 2: Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce to you the main setting of the story. Think about Baldacci’s description of the setting. Then, use the back of this sheet to answer the questions below.

4. How does he describe the mountains? Write down sentences from the selection that describe this new world that Lou and Oz enter.
5. Look at the sentences you wrote for item 4. What do you experience as a reader after reading Baldacci’s description of Lou and Oz’s new “home”?

Most Important Word



Reading Skills

- Identifying the main idea
- Making generalizations
- Summarizing

Overview of the “Most Important Word “ Strategy

The craft of writing is primarily a process of choosing individual words to comprise precise phrases and choosing ways to place those phrases in an order that will yield well-crafted, meaningful sentences. Throughout *Wish You Well*, Baldacci uses a number of words consistently to draw the reader into the body of the text, making unfamiliar characters become familiar in the readers’ minds. Baldacci’s use of important words assists the reader in maneuvering through the text while maintaining a focus on overall meaning.

The “Most Important Word” strategy may be used at any point in the reading of *Wish You Well*, but teachers and students may find the strategy most useful if it is used from the beginning to the end of the text.

Activity for the “Most Important Word “ Strategy

1. Invite the students into a discussion of the words *wish* and *well*, as found in the title of the novel.
2. Begin the discussion by brainstorming definitions of the two words. These definitions may be from the dictionary or may be student-generated. Record these definitions on an overhead.
3. Ask students to identify various passages in which these two words are used as part of a phrase or alone, and ask them to explain the significance of these instances. (Note: The wishing well is first introduced and identified as such toward the end of chapter 11.)
4. With a number of examples listed and explained, have the students discuss in small groups or write about the significance of the words *wish* and *well* in the title of Baldacci’s novel.
5. Divide students into small groups, and assign each group a certain number of chapters of the novel to examine.
6. Have the students scour their assigned chapters for important words used by Baldacci to support the theme of the novel.
7. Have each group report to the class the words they found most important in their second reading.
8. Keep a tally of the “Most Important Words” each group identifies.
9. Use this list as the basis for a whole-class discussion, noting any common words/phrases identified. The ensuing discussion will help solidify for students an author’s intent in choosing words carefully to craft a message.

Assessment

As a concluding activity, ask students to write an essay in which they show how important words affect their understanding of one of the elements of fiction in this novel. Use the following rubric to assess the writing:

Argumentative Writing: Primary Trait Rubric

Criteria

- statement of opinion
- language control
- treatment of opposing point of view
- supporting reasons
- appropriate voice/control
- developed arguments
- mechanical correctness

Presenting an Argument

Elaborated Argument (6): The paper states an opinion and gives compelling reasons to support the opinion. It also presents clear, detailed, and specific explanations in support of the argument. It demonstrates strong language control (word choice, sentence variety). Voice and tone are appropriate for audience and topic. It acknowledges and refutes opposing points of view. It contains almost no mechanical and usage errors.

Developed Argument (5): The paper states an opinion and provides legitimate reasons to support the opinion. It also presents several clearly developed explanations in support of the argument. It demonstrates an awareness of audience through the use of voice and/or selection of supporting details. It demonstrates good language control and addresses the opposite point of view. There may be a few errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure, but they do not interfere with communication.

Attempting to Present an Argument

Argument (4): The paper states an opinion and gives reasons to support the opinion. Although logical, the explanations are not well developed or detailed. It contains a brief summary of the opposite point of view but does not discuss or refute it. There may be consistent errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure, but these errors do not interfere with communication.

Elaborated Opinion (3): The paper states an opinion, gives reasons to support the opinion, and attempts to develop the opinion with further explanation. However, the explanations given are vague, inconsistent, incomplete, or disjointed. The paper may or may not contain a brief reference to the opposite point of view. Generally, the writing demonstrates weak control of such elements as word choice and organization. Errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure occasionally interfere with communication.

Writing about an Opinion

Extended Opinion (2): The paper states an opinion and gives reasons to support the opinion, but the reasons are not explained or the explanations are confusing. There is no reference to another point of view. There are frequent problems with sentence structure and word choice. The paper may evidence a consistent pattern of errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure that interferes with communication.

Opinion (1): The paper is a statement of opinion, but no reasons are given to support the opinion, or the reasons given are inconsistent or unrelated to the opinion. Although an attempt may have been made to support an opinion, the writer's views typically are presented with little clarity, organization,

coherence, or supporting evidence. The writing reflects little or no writer's voice or audience awareness. It may contain many distracting errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure.

Elements of Fiction Chart



Reading Skills

- Making generalizations
- Determining cause and effects
- Using chronology
- Making connections

Overview of the “Elements of Fiction Chart” Strategy

Throughout a novel, the author provides pertinent information to assist the reader in comprehending the action of the story. Each element of an Elements of Fiction Chart is separately helpful to the reader in creating a mental picture. The reader is afforded an opportunity to identify the action’s setting, given a description of each of the major characters, presented with the goals the characters are trying to accomplish and the relationship of these goals to the novel, and shown the message that is conveyed by the author. Attending to these elements is an on-going process that should be revisited frequently to update information as needed. This is a good culminating activity to use after reading a series of chapters.

Activity for the “Elements of Fiction Chart” Strategy

Have the students complete an Elements of Fiction Chart (see next page) for *Wish You Well*. Clues have been provided to refresh the memory of students as to where information from the novel should be placed. The first two elements, Setting and Character Traits, can be completed more readily than some of the others. As the reading of the novel progresses, students will be able to complete more of the chart.

Assessment

The easiest way to grade this activity is to award 20 points for each element, for a total of 100 points.

The Elements of Fiction Chart

Name _____

Book _____

SETTING	CHARACTER TRAITS	CHARACTER GOALS	PLOT	THEME
Where does the story take place?	What are the names and descriptions of the major characters in the novel?	What is the character trying to accomplish?	<u>Rising Action:</u> What information leads to the problem or conflict? <u>Climax:</u> What is the unfolding of the conflict and how are the major characters affected? <u>Falling Action:</u> How is the conflict resolved?	What is the message the author is trying to convey by writing the work?

Positive Profile



Reading Skills

- Analyzing cause and effect
- Summarizing
- Making generalizations
- Making inferences
- Making connections

Overview of the “Positive Profile” Strategy

Throughout a novel, a character’s personality evolves. The purpose of this exercise is to create a positive profile of a particular character by gathering information about the character, evaluating and synthesizing the information, and creating a positive written impression of him/her.

Activity for the “Positive Profile” Strategy

1. Have students choose from the novel one character whose attributes can be highlighted in a positive manner.
2. Ask the students to create a diary of information about their character, including information about the character’s nickname(s), strengths, hobbies, and actions.
3. Have the students use the information from the diary to create a positive profile of the character, ending with a positive statement about him/her.

Assessment

The students should be assessed on how well they have profiled their character — how complete their gathered information is and how well they have assessed this information to create a complete and accurate profile.

Positive Profile

Directions

Create a positive profile for a character in the novel. Choose either Eugene, Lou, Louisa, Jack, Amanda, Diamond, Cotton, Oz, or Billy.

Complete name: _____

Nickname: _____

Strengths: _____

Hobbies: _____

Smartest action performed: _____

Questionable actions: _____

Positive statement about the character: _____

Predicting the Outcomes



Reading Skills

- Making predictions
- Making connections
- Making inferences
- Determining cause and effect

Overview of the “Predicting the Outcomes” Strategy

“Predicting the Outcomes” is a strategy that allows students to “stop,” “drop,” and “roll.” Students are encouraged to stop where they are, drop the novel (close the book momentarily), and roll all of the information they have into a prediction of what will happen in the coming chapters. This activity should reoccur during the reading of the novel and is effective throughout to determine the comprehension of the students.

Activity for the “Predicting the Outcomes” Strategy

Several questions have been provided to guide students in predicting what may happen next in the novel. The strategy can be applied to any character at any point in the reading of the book.

1. Have the students read up to chapter 20 and answer the following questions about Diamond:
 - Is Diamond always very vague about his personal life?
 - What do you believe has happened to his family?
 - Who is responsible for his care?
 - Is Diamond responsible for the mishaps that have been occurring in the next town?
 - What will happen to Diamond?
2. Have each student use information from chapters 6 through 20 to predict the life and fate of Diamond and write down his or her predictions.
3. In a class discussion, have the students tell what they know about Diamond.
4. Ask the students as a class to predict the future of Diamond, using the information discussed in class. Write this class prediction on the board.

Assessment

Have the students compare their individual written predictions with those of the class and rate their prediction as same, similar, or different. After the students have completed their reading of the novel, revisit this activity, and have them compare and rate their individual and class predictions with what actually happens to Diamond.

Logographic Cues



Reading Skills

- Understanding text structure
- Identifying the main idea

Overview of the “Logographic Cues” Strategy

A logographic cue is a simple symbol or picture that acts as a visual reminder of an important literary element in a text, thereby providing a support for students as they read. While this strategy may be used before, during, or after reading, the activity below employs the strategy during the reading of *Wish You Well*. Baldacci’s use of description assists the reader in visualizing characters, setting, and motifs throughout the novel. However, a student reader might find it helpful to mark the text with symbols to remind himself/herself of the location of these elements.

Activity for the “Logographic Cues” Strategy

1. As a means of modeling the strategy, tell the students that one of the major motifs used by Baldacci is that of the railroad. In the text, the railroad serves as a division as well as a connection between places and people.
2. Ask the students to design a cue for references to the railroad and to mark the text with this cue. (The railroad is first introduced at the beginning of chapter 4.)
3. Read aloud passages referring to the railroad, and point out the importance of this motif in determining one of Baldacci’s intentions in this novel.
4. For individual practice, ask the students to design their own logographic cue for Baldacci’s descriptions of Virginia.
5. Invite the students to mark the text with this cue each time they read a passage that describes some aspect of the Virginia setting of the novel.
6. Divide students into small groups, and have the groups discuss the passages they have marked with logographic cues for the Virginia setting. Be sure that the students discuss the importance of setting in each passage.
7. In a whole-class discussion, ask the groups to share their determinations of the importance of setting, and determine if similarities of importance of setting exist among the student groups.

Assessment

As a concluding activity, ask the students to write an essay in which they discuss the importance of the railroad in the conflict of the novel or the importance of setting in determining theme. Use the following rubric to assess the essays.

Argumentative Writing: Analytic Rubric

Standard: To convince a reader to consider an opinion.

Scoring Guide: Each category is rated 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)

Statement of Opinion _____ of 5

- States opinion in the first paragraph
- Asserts an arguable position
- Provides a clear, specific, and elaborated focus for the essay

Arguments and Explanations _____ of 5

- Supports opinion with clear and compelling reasons
- Provides detailed, specific explanations of reasons

Opposing Point of View _____ of 5

- Acknowledges other point(s) of view
- Addresses and refutes arguments in other point(s) of view

Tone _____ of 5

- Chooses precise and appropriate words
- Reflects awareness of audience through use of appropriate voice

Language Control _____ of 5

- Makes few or no errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

Total: _____ of 25